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2004685, Man Jailed for Over a Year Saw No Lawyer

Posted by DoYouEverWonder on Fri Dec-23-05 06:15 PM

December 23, 2005, 3:20 PM EST

DALLAS -- A man was jailed for more than a year without ever seeing a lawyer as he waited for a repeatedly postponed court hearing, gaining release only after a cellmate told an attorney about the case.

Walter Mann Sr., 69, was released Dec. 16 after a year and three months -- more than twice the time he would have served if he had been convicted in his contempt-of-court case.

Mann's legal troubles began in 2002, when his 13-year-old son assaulted him and was sent to a juvenile detention center. Mann, who was unemployed and on disability benefits, was ordered to pay \$50 a month for the boy's housing but never did, according to court records.

Prosecutors sought to have Mann held in contempt of juvenile court, which led to an order that he be brought before a judge.

The judge then incarcerated him in September 2004 for three warrants alleging that Mann wrote bad checks. Then he waited more than a year as his contempt case was postponed again and again.

"He wasn't lost in the system," said Sheriff's Department spokesman Sgt. Don Peritz. "We knew he was here ... we hold them until the judge says to hold him no longer."

<http://www.newsday.com/news/nationworld/nation/wire/sns-ap-left-in-jail,0,2459777.story?coll=sns-ap-nation-headlines>